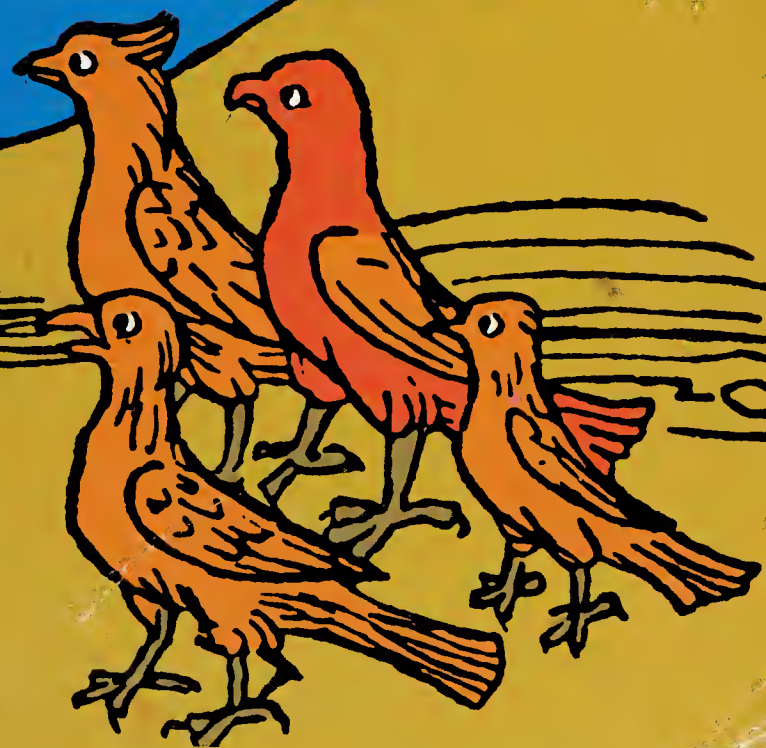


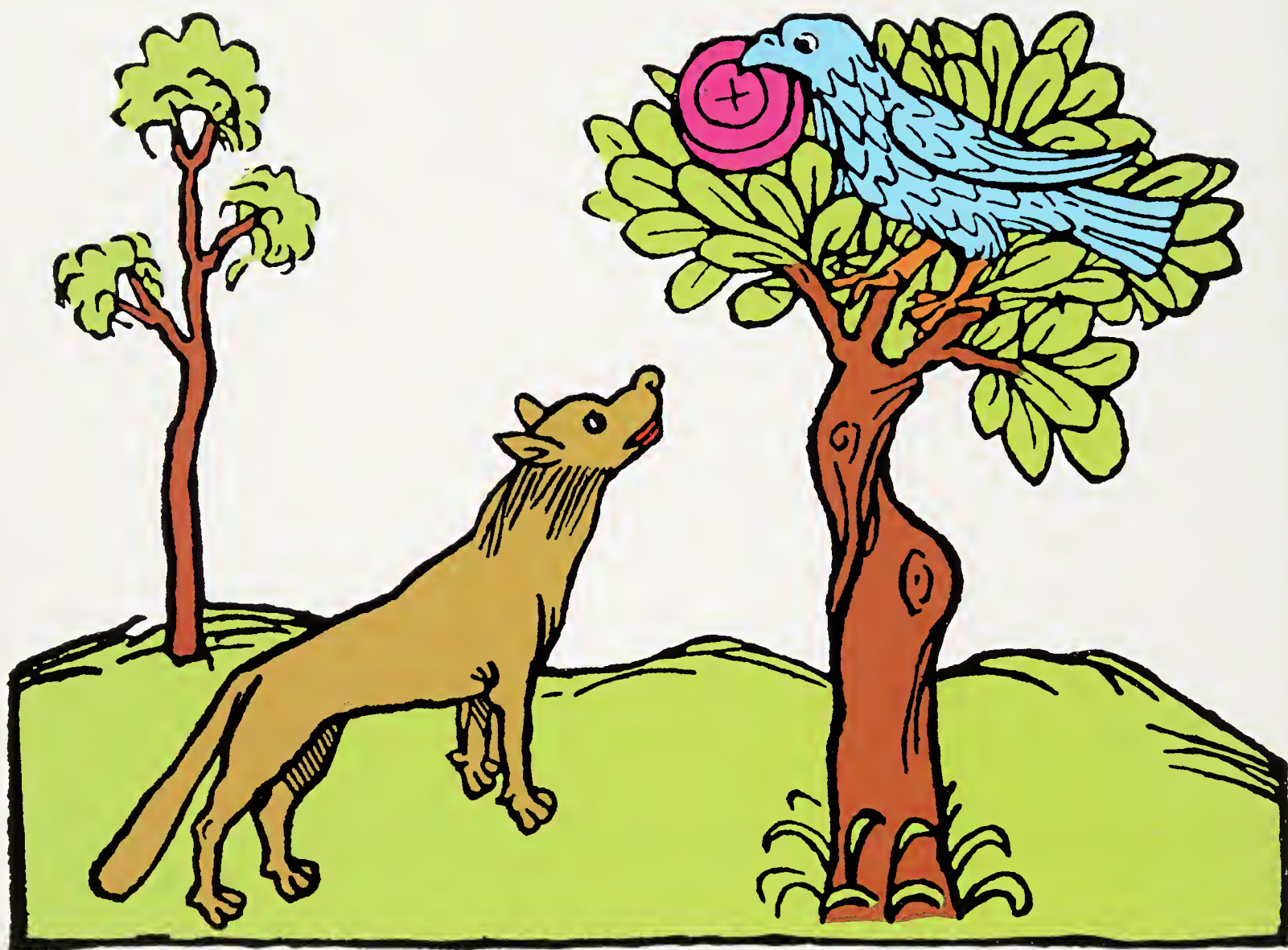
Dover
Coloring
Book

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AESOP'S FABLES COLORING BOOK







AESOP'S FABLES

COLORING BOOK

DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC., NEW YORK

Publisher's Note

Aesop's Fables have been among everyone's favorite stories almost as long as people can remember. They were first written down in Greece over two thousand years ago, and have been told again and again in every language. When printing was invented in Germany in the 1400's, several editions of *Aesop's Fables*, illustrated with woodcuts, were among the earliest printed books.

All the pictures in this coloring book are from one edition of the *Fables* printed in Ulm, Germany, about 1476. Unfortunately, we do not know the name of the very talented artist who did these lively illustrations. Part of the charm of many of these pictures is due to the device of showing two different moments of the story in one scene. For instance, in "The Frogs Who Asked for a King," we see Jupiter giving the frogs the block of wood, and right next to that we see the stork attacking the frogs. In "The Lion and the Mouse" we see the lion both catching the mouse and being freed by the mouse. And so on.

The pictures as we present them are authentic. They have not been redrawn—only enlarged to add to your coloring pleasure. And people in the 1400's *did* color books like this at home!

To make the book more complete, we have added the stories that go with the pictures. These new retellings in modern English are (with just a few exceptions) based closely on old Greek texts, which give the simplest and most reliable forms of the stories. Many of the fables included will be familiar to you, others perhaps less so, but they are all old and authentic.

So this is a fine *Aesop* to start off with if you have never read *Aesop* before, and a good one to add to your collection if you are an old friend of *Aesop*. Above all, it is a wonderful opportunity to use your coloring skills and imagination.

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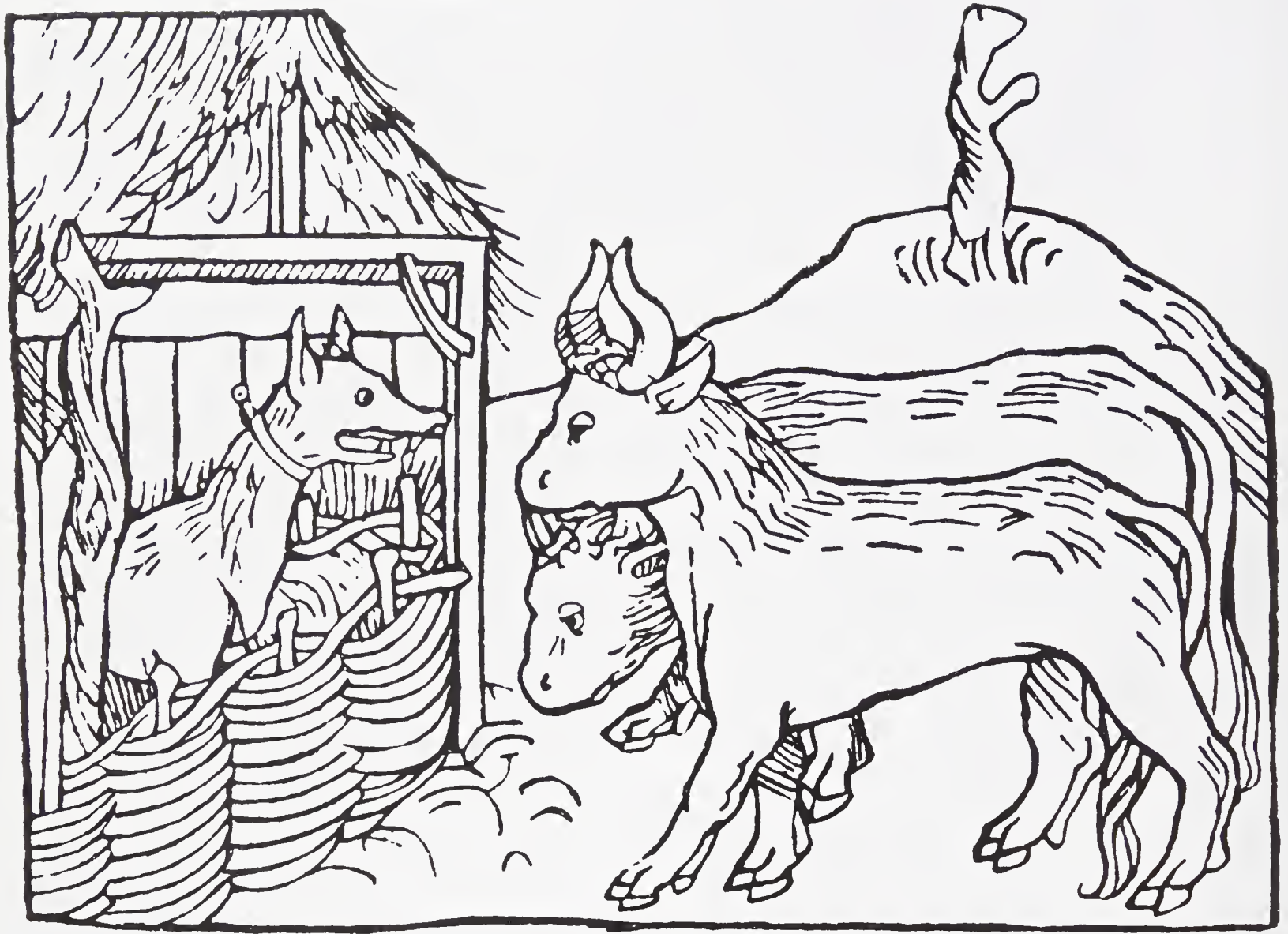
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A very hungry fox saw some bunches of grapes hanging from an arbor. He tried and tried to reach them, but couldn't. Going away, he said to himself, "Oh, they were sour, anyway."

Moral: People who can't get something they were after decide that they don't really want it.

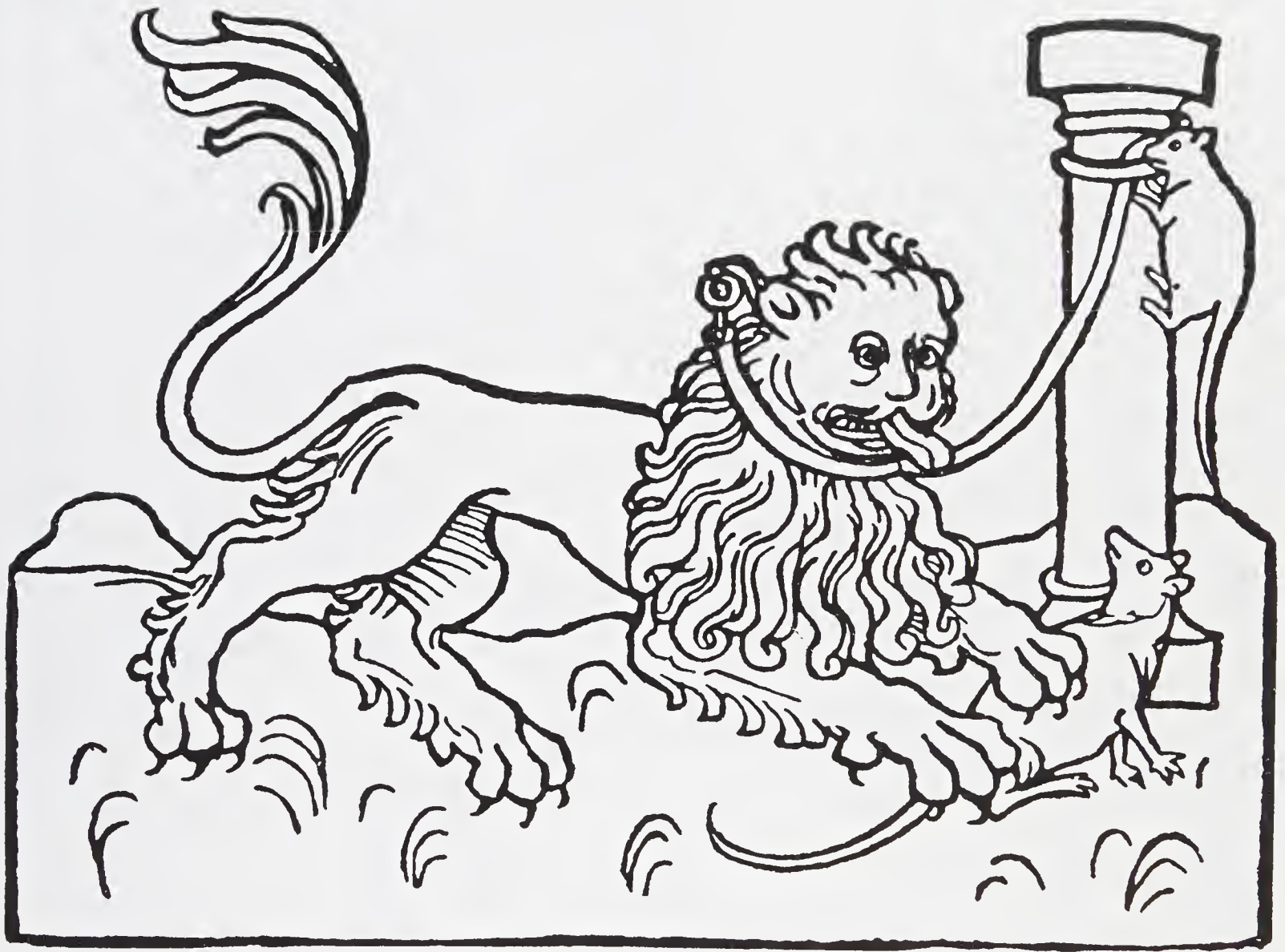
The Fox & the Grapes



The Dog in the Manger

Once, when the oxen on a farm were returning to their stable tired and hungry after a hard day's work, they found a nasty barking dog standing in the manger where their hay was kept. The dog couldn't eat the hay himself, but he wouldn't allow the hungry oxen to get it, either.

Moral: Don't be a "dog in the manger." If you have something that you don't need and you know that someone else really needs it, don't keep it just for spite.



A mouse was running around a sleeping lion's mouth when the lion sprang up and seized him. The lion was about to gulp him down, but the mouse begged to be let free, saying, "If you spare me, I will return the favor." The lion smiled and let him go. Not long after that, the lion was caught by some hunters and tied to a tree with a rope. The mouse, hearing him moan, gnawed through the rope and freed him, saying, "You laughed at me then, thinking you would never get anything in exchange. Now you know that even mice can do a favor."

Moral: You mustn't look down on the little fellow.

The Lion & the Mouse



The Deer & His Antlers

A deer came to drink at a spring and saw his reflection in the water. He admired his beautiful wide antlers, but he thought his legs looked skinny and weak. Just then some hunters approached, and he dashed away. His swift legs, which he thought were ugly, saved his life—until his beautiful wide antlers got caught in some branches and he was captured.

Moral: People often don't know their own strengths and weaknesses.



The frogs, unhappy at having no ruler, sent messengers to Jupiter, the king of the gods, asking him to give them a king of their own. Seeing their foolishness, he stuck a block of wood into the middle of their pond. At first the frogs were terribly frightened, and dived down to the bottom. But after some time had gone by and they saw that the piece of wood didn't move, they lost their fear of it and were so disrespectful that they walked on it and sat on it. Wanting someone better, they sent to Jupiter again, urging him to change their king. This time he grew angry with them and sent them a stork which caught them one by one and ate them up.

Moral: Rely on yourself and not so much on others.

The Frogs Who Asked for a King



The Field Mouse & the House Mouse

Once a field mouse invited his friend the house mouse to dinner. Not satisfied with the meal of barley and wheat, the house mouse said to the field mouse, "There are so many good things to eat where I live! Come visit me and you'll taste a little of everything." So the two of them went to the house mouse's house, where they found vegetables, fruits, dates, honey and cheese. When the field mouse saw all this, he began to think that the house mouse's life was really much better than his own. But each time they were ready to begin eating, some man would suddenly open the door, and the poor mice would have to jump into a crack in the floor. Finally the field mouse, who was good and hungry by this time, said, "Friend, stay here and eat to your heart's content—if you don't mind all the trouble and the danger. I'll stick to my wheat and barley, as long as I can live in peace and quiet."

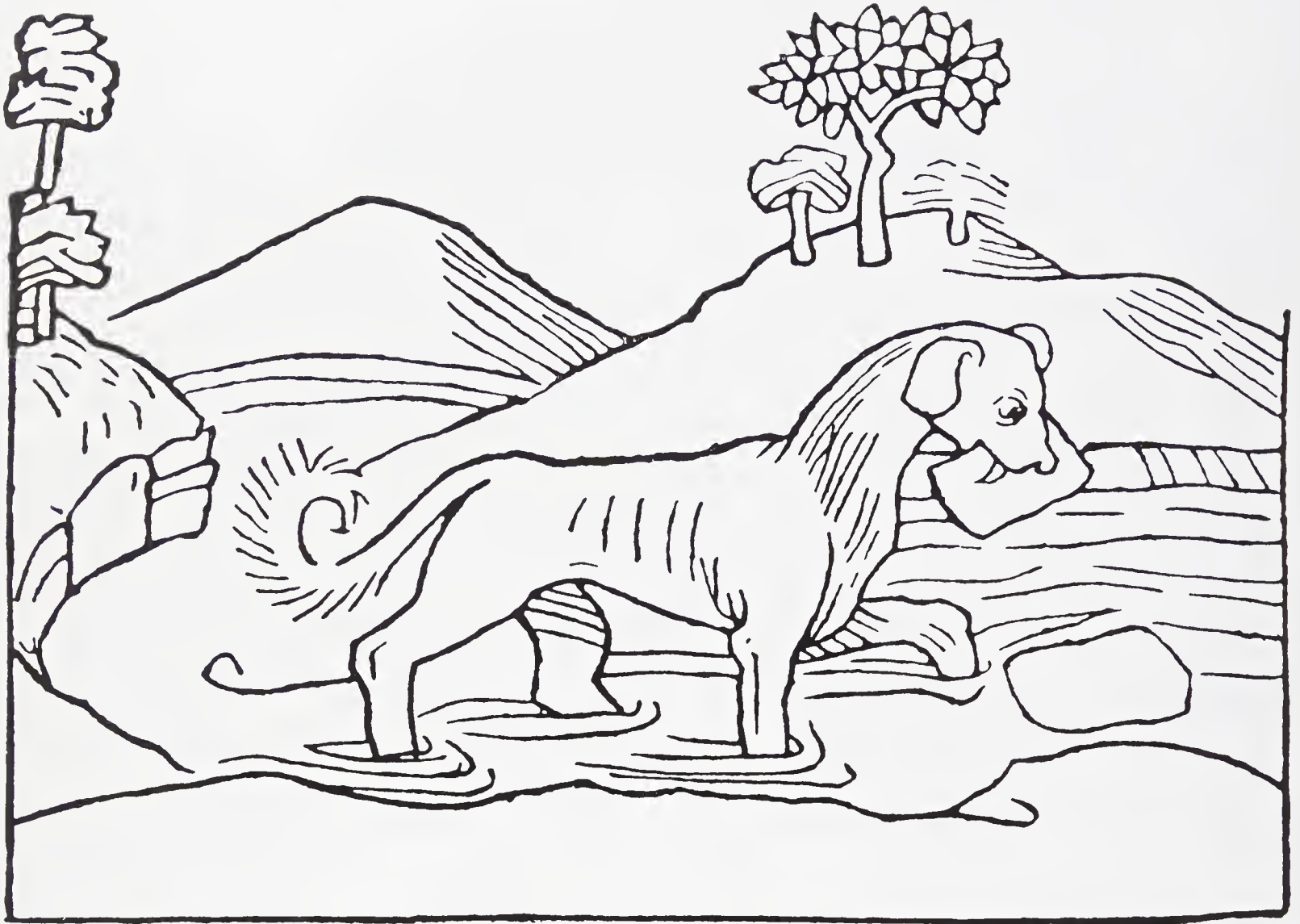
Moral: A simple life without worries is better than a rich life full of cares.



A wolf found a lamb drinking at a stream, and tried to find some excuse for eating him. First the wolf said, "Last year you insulted me," but the lamb said, "I was just born this season." Then the wolf said, "You've been eating the grass on my property," but the lamb said, "I'm still too young to eat solid food." Then the wolf said, "I'd like to drink at this stream, too, but you're making the water dirty," but the lamb said, "You're farther upstream, and the water passes you first." Finally the wolf said, "Well, I'm not about to go hungry just because you ruin all my excuses" — and he ate the lamb.

Moral: When a person is set on doing something wicked, he makes up weak excuses to make himself feel better.

The Wolf & the Lamb



The Dog & His Reflection

A dog who had run off with a piece of meat was walking along the bank of a river. Looking into the water, he thought he saw an even larger piece of meat, and let go of the one he had. So, trying to get more, he lost what he started out with.

Moral: Be satisfied with what you have.



It was a very frosty winter. The ant had gathered plenty of food at harvest time and had stored it in his home. But the grasshopper was dying of hunger and cold. He asked the ant to let him have some food to save his life. The ant said, "Where were you in the summertime? How come you didn't gather any food during the harvest?" "I was singing," replied the grasshopper; "I was entertaining the people who passed by." The ant burst out laughing and said, "Well, now that it's winter, why not dance?"

Moral: Think about serious times in advance, and don't think only of playing.

The Grasshopper & the Ant



The Rooster & the Jewel

One day a rooster was looking for food in the barnyard when he found a very beautiful and expensive jewel on the ground. "Hmm," he said, "too bad it isn't a chicken corn."

Moral: When you need something serious, like food, even valuable jewels lose their importance.



A crow found a cheese and flew up into a tree with it, holding it in her beak. A fox, seeing this, decided to get it away from her by trickery. "You crows have the finest shape of any bird," he said, "and you are the most colorful by far. Now, if you only had a voice, you would be king of all birds." Taken in by this, the crow cawed as loudly as she could, dropping the cheese. The fox grabbed it and said, "You have a voice, all right, but not much brains."

Moral: If you pay attention to flatterers, you will regret it.

The Fox & the Crow



The Travelers & the Bear

Two friends were walking down a path together when they met a bear. One of them got frightened, climbed up a tree and hid. His friend knew that he could not defend himself all alone, so he fell down on the ground and pretended to be dead. The bear came up to him and sniffed his head and his ears. The man was very careful not to breathe too hard. The bear, believing he was dead, went away. The other man came down from the tree and asked his friend what the bear had whispered in his ear. His friend said, "The bear told me never to travel any more with people who run away when there is danger."

Moral: A real friend helps you out when you're in trouble.



A shepherd started to play a certain trick after driving his flock out of the village. He would call for help, shouting to the villagers that wolves were attacking the sheep. Two or three times the villagers were frightened and came running, only to be laughed at and sent back home. But the next time wolves really did attack. When he called for help the villagers paid no attention, thinking it was just another joke. The whole flock was lost.

Moral: If you tell a lot of lies, no one will believe you when you tell the truth.

The Shepherd Who Cried Wolf



The Frog & the Ox

A frog saw the big ox in the meadow one morning. When the frog met another frog friend, he began to boast: "Do you think that ox is big? I can be just as big as that!" And he puffed and puffed and swelled and swelled. But he still wasn't nearly as big as the ox. So he kept on puffing himself up—until he exploded.

Moral: It's dangerous to pretend to be something you aren't.



There was a time when birds always lived on the ground. The swallow called all the birds together and warned them not to annoy human beings, but always to be friendly to them. But one of the other birds said just the reverse: "Let's eat up all their flax seed so they can't make any more linen nets to catch us with." The swallow had the right idea, so she lives in cities and houses close to people and suffers no harm. But the other birds, thinking that the flax was the cause of all their troubles, ate the seeds and grew very fat. Then people began to catch them and cook them. After that, they decided not to stay on the ground close to people, but to fly through the air instead.

Moral: If you are friendly, both you and the other person benefit by it.

The Swallow & the Birds



The Lapdog & the Donkey

A donkey noticed how his master enjoyed playing with his little lapdog, and he thought his master might like him to act the same way. So one day he leaned his heavy front hoofs on his master's shoulders and began to lick his master's face with his big, rough tongue. His master had to call the servants to drive him away.

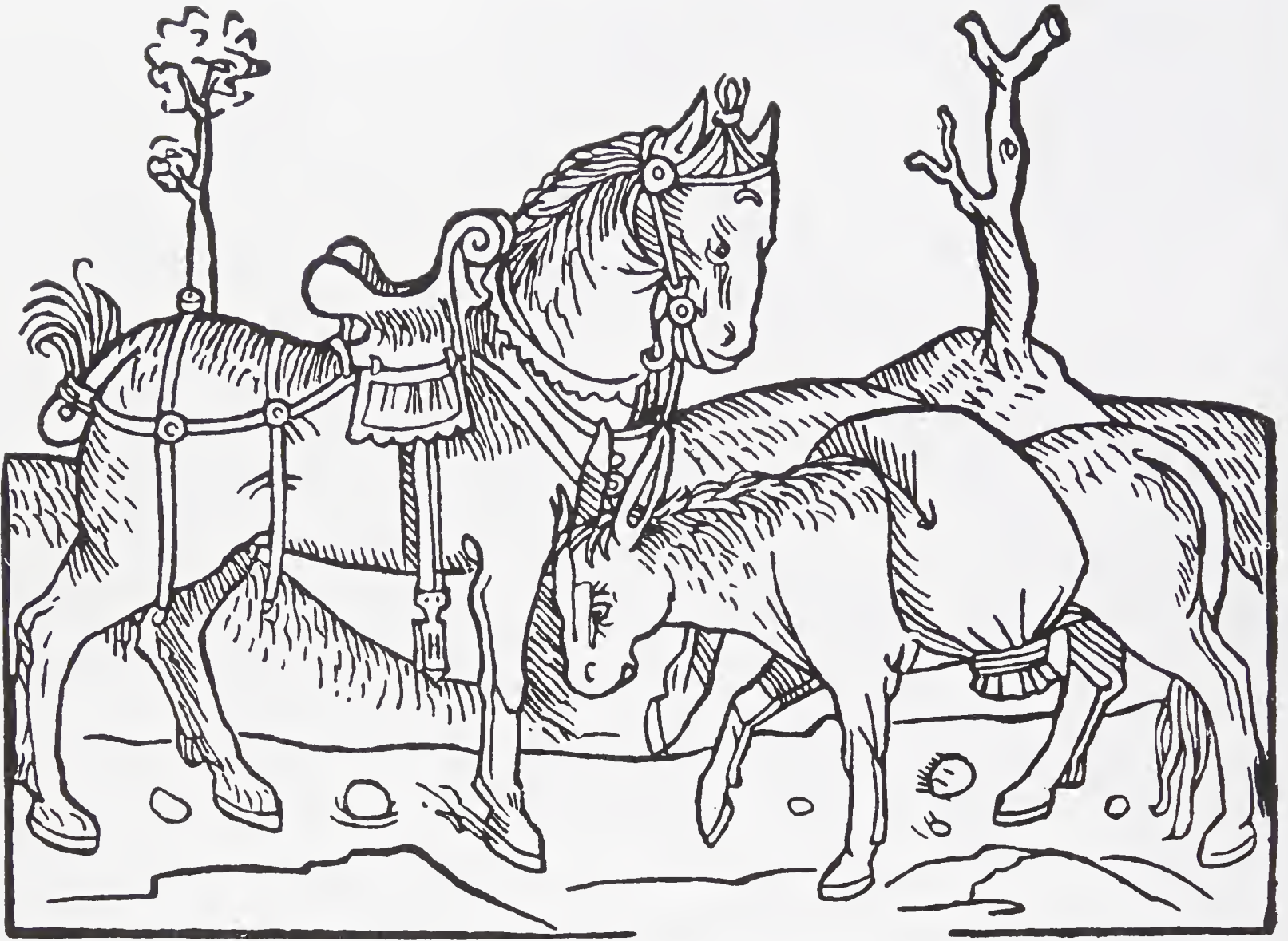
Moral: Always be yourself and do not foolishly imitate others.



A wolf once got a bone stuck in his throat. He offered money to a crane if she would put her head into his mouth and pull the bone out of his throat. She did what he wanted and asked for her money. The wolf, laughing and baring his teeth, said, "Forget about the money. Just be glad that you got your head out of a wolf's mouth safe and sound."

The Wolf & the Crane

Moral: If you deal with nasty people, don't expect too much.



The Donkey & the Horse

A heavily burdened donkey, seeing a horse with a magnificent saddle and trappings, thought that the horse was much happier than he was himself. "The horse eats well and is well treated," he said, "while I am beaten and get just a little bran to eat." But when a war broke out, the horse was mounted by a soldier with heavy weapons. They rode into the midst of the battle, and the horse was wounded. When the donkey heard about this, he changed his mind and felt sorry for the horse.

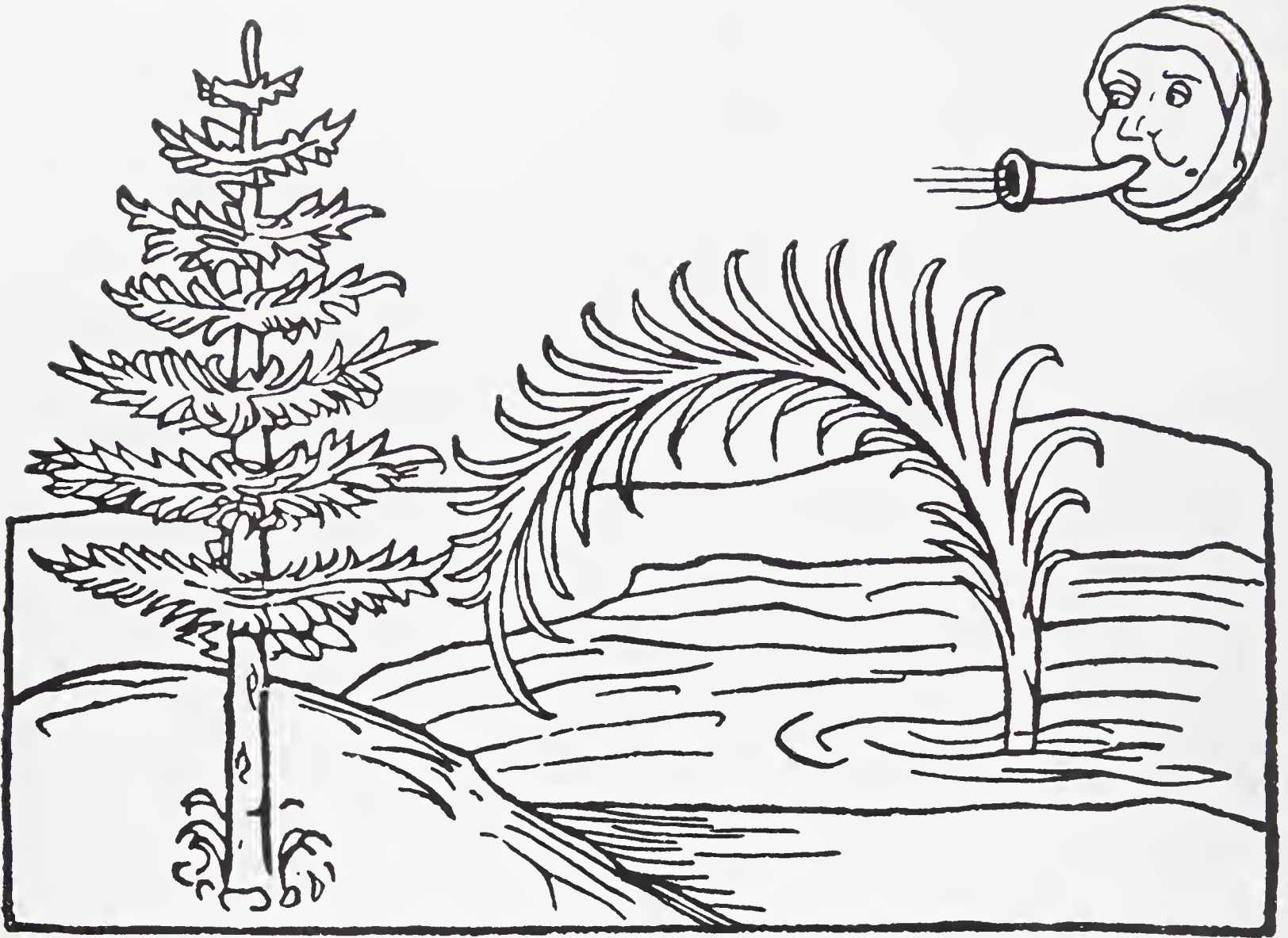
Moral: Don't thoughtlessly envy people who seem to be happier than you, for they may have many troubles that you don't know about.



Jupiter wanted to name a king of birds. He ordered all the birds to come before him on a certain day so he could pick the best-looking one. The jackdaw thought he was a pretty ugly bird, so he went around collecting feathers that had fallen off peacocks. He glued them to himself, and he really looked quite good. When the big day came, all the birds assembled, including our fancy jackdaw. Jupiter was about to make him the winner, but the peacocks got angry and pulled their feathers away from the jackdaw—who left quickly after that.

The Jackdaw & the Peacocks

Moral: If you pretend, you will finally be found out.



The Tree & the Reed

Once, when a tree had been badly damaged by the wind, it noticed that the reed had not been hurt at all. The tree said to the reed, "I am strong and thick, you are thin and weak. Why does the wind injure me and not you?" The reed answered, "I know how weak I am, so when the wind blows I bend along with it and I don't feel the full force of it. But you rely on your strength and you fight the wind—that's why you get broken."

Moral: Judge your own strength and act accordingly.



A fox invited a crane to dinner, and served soup in a very shallow dish. The crane was unable to eat it and the fox laughed. Returning the invitation, the crane served the meal in a tall, narrow jar. The fox couldn't get his head into the jar and went home hungry.

The Fox & the Crane

Moral: Different people do different things well.



The Man Who Smashed the Idol

A man had an idol to which he prayed, asking for wealth. But the more he prayed to it, the poorer he became. Finally he grew very angry and started to smash it. When the head broke, a great number of gold coins poured out. The man gathered up the gold and said to the idol, "Why do you always do just the opposite of what you should do? When I prayed to you, you didn't help me; now that I mistreat you, I get good things in return."

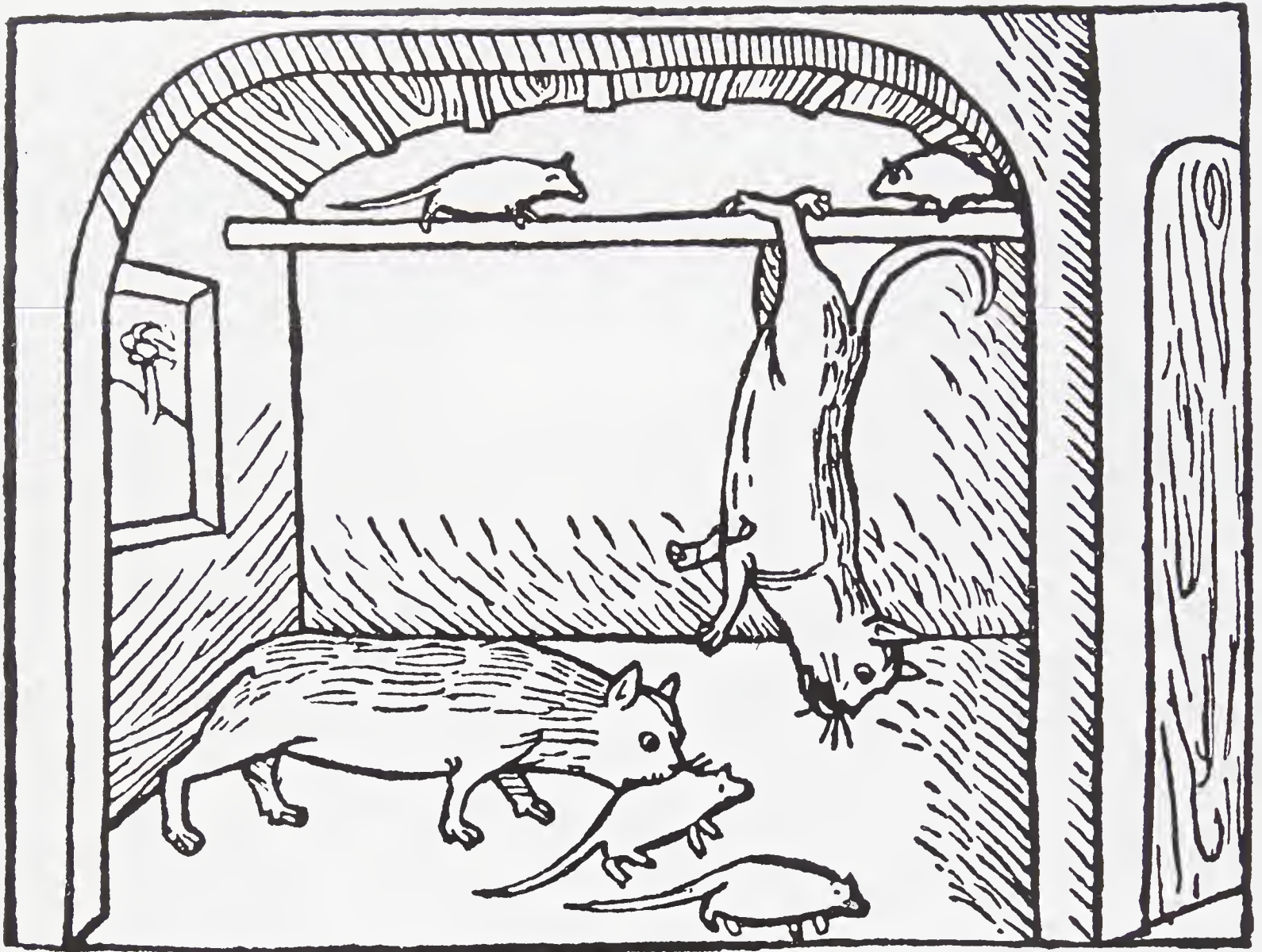
Moral: Prayers and hopes do not necessarily determine future events.



A fisherman who didn't know his job went out to work one day with a *fish* net and a *clarinet*. First he played some music, thinking that the fish would like it and come up to the top. But he got very tired and nothing happened. Then he put away the clarinet and spread his fish net—and caught a lot of fish. When he shook them out of the net, they jumped around on the ground. "How contrary you are!" the fisherman cried. "When I played, you wouldn't dance; now that I've stopped, you do!"

The Musical Fisherman

Moral: Some people never do the predictable thing.



The Cat & the Mice

Hearing about a house that was full of mice, a cat came and began to catch them one by one. The mice held a meeting and said, "Let's stay deep down in our holes, where the cat can't reach us. In that way we won't all be destroyed." Then the cat had to think up a trick to get them out of their holes again. She climbed up onto a pole and hung down from it, pretending to be dead. The mice, peeping out of their holes and seeing the cat hanging there, said, "Ha! ha! Even if you turn into a sack, we won't come anywhere near you."

Moral: A wise man is not easily fooled.



A farmer set up some snares in his field to catch the cranes and geese that were eating his young plants. Among the birds that he caught was one of a completely different kind. This bird said to the farmer, "Please save me. Please let me go. I just got here, and I did no harm. You can see I'm not a crane or a goose. In fact, I'm a very helpful bird!" The farmer laughed and said, "I know very well what you are. But you were caught together with these birds, and you will die along with them."

The Farmer & the Bird

Moral: People are often judged by the company they keep.



The Eagle & the Jackdaw

An eagle flew down from a high cliff and caught a lamb. A jackdaw saw this, got jealous, and decided to imitate the eagle. He swooped down onto a large sheep, but got his claws entangled in the sheep's wool. The jackdaw couldn't lift the sheep or even fly away himself. The shepherd came along, caught the jackdaw, clipped his wings, and brought him home to his children. When the children asked what kind of bird it was, the shepherd replied, "*I am sure it's a jackdaw, but he thinks he's an eagle.*"

Moral: You always lose when you try to do something impossible.



A fox fell into a deep well and didn't know how to get out. A thirsty goat came to the well and asked the fox if the water was good. The fox said that the water was just wonderful, and invited the goat to come down and join him. The goat was so thirsty that he didn't stop to think, but jumped right in. But when the goat had had enough to drink, he started worrying about getting out, too. Then the fox said, "I have a plan. Stand up on your hind legs and rest your forelegs on the side of the well. I will run up your back, and once I'm out I'll pull you up after me." The goat agreed, but as soon as the fox escaped from the well, he started to run away. When the goat complained, the fox said, "My friend, you shouldn't have jumped in before you knew how to get out."

Moral: A wise person never begins anything without considering how it may end.

The Fox & the Goat



The Hares & the Frogs

The hares, disgusted with their own cowardice, decided to drown themselves. When they came to the pond they were going to jump into, the frogs who lived in the pond heard the noise the hares made, and dived to the bottom. When the hares saw that, they said, "Let's not drown ourselves. There are animals even more cowardly than we are!"

Moral: Take heart. There is always someone less confident than you.



The bee once brought a gift of honey to Jupiter, who was so pleased that he offered to give her whatever she asked for. The bee asked for a sting with which she could kill anyone who tried to take honey from her hive. Jupiter refused this request, since he loved human beings very much. He said to the bee, "You won't get exactly what you asked for. If someone comes to take honey from you and you attack him and wound him, your sting will remain in the wound and *you* are the one who will die."

Moral: Evil wishes generally harm the wisher.

The Bee & Jupiter



The Vinegrower & His Sons

An old vinegrower was about to die, and he wanted his sons to learn his trade. He called them to his bedside and said, "Boys, I'm dying. Find all there is in my vineyard." They thought there was a treasure hidden there, and after their father died they took picks and shovels and dug up all the ground eagerly. They found no treasure, but the ground had been very well prepared for the vines, which produced a huge number of grapes and made them rich.

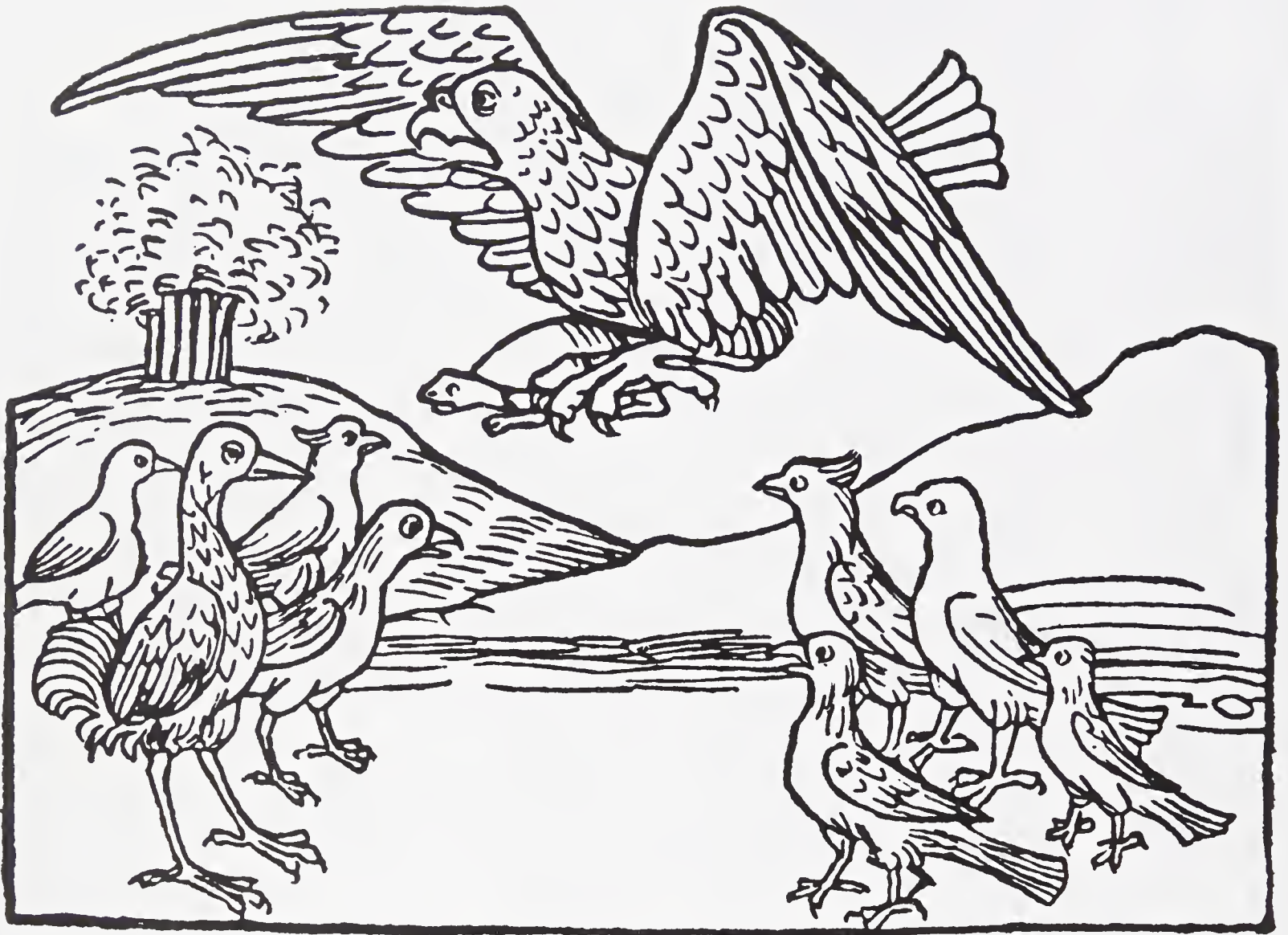
Moral: Hard work is man's greatest treasure.



A hungry wolf was wandering around in search of food. When he was outside one house, he heard a little boy crying. Then he heard an old woman shouting at the little boy, saying, "If you don't stop crying, I'm going to give you to the wolf." The wolf thought she really meant it, and he waited there a long time. Hours later, he heard the old woman speaking sweetly to the little boy, saying, "If the wolf comes here, darling, we'll kill him." When the wolf heard that, he went away grumbling. "What a house! They say one thing and they mean something else!"

Moral: Some people don't do what they say they will.

The Wolf & the Old Woman



The Turtle & the Eagle

A turtle saw an eagle flying and thought that he would like to fly also. The turtle offered the eagle money to teach him how. The eagle said it was impossible, but the turtle kept on pleading and insisting. So the eagle picked him up and flew into the sky. When they were very high up, the eagle let go of the turtle, who landed on a rock and was killed.

Moral: Trying for things that are impossible may lead to disaster.



An old lion, who was no longer able to go out and catch animals to eat, thought of a plan. He shut himself up in a cave and pretended to be very, very ill. Whenever an animal would come in to ask how he was feeling, he would jump on it and eat it. One day a fox, who had figured out what was going on, stood outside the cave and asked the lion about his health. The lion replied, "I feel pretty good today. Why don't you come in for a chat?" And the fox answered, "I would, if I didn't see so many tracks of animals going in but none of animals coming out again."

Moral: To a wise man, evidence is sometimes more important than words.

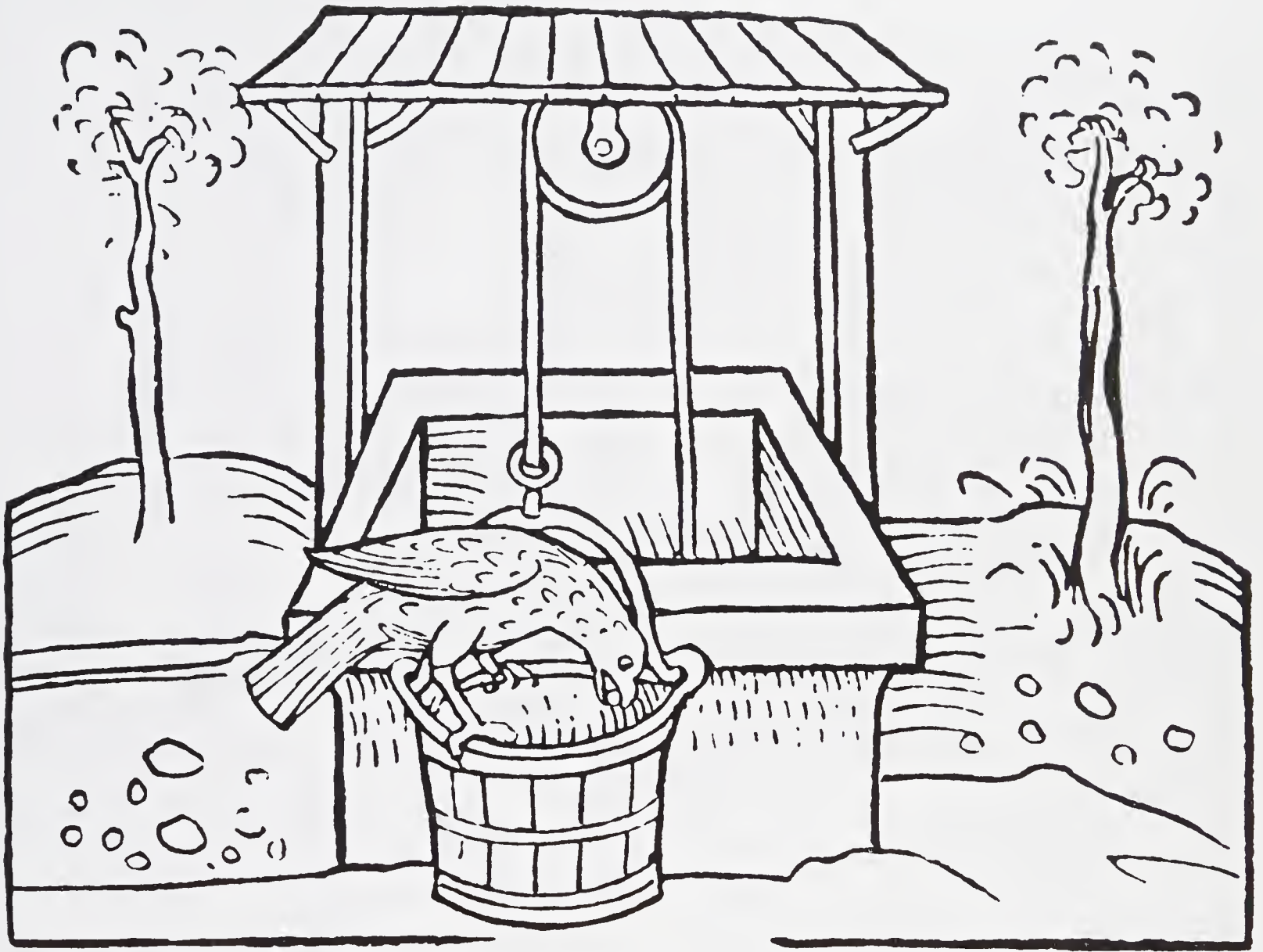
The Lion & the Fox



The Goose That Laid Golden Eggs

A man had a wonderful goose that always laid golden eggs. Thinking it had a lot of gold inside, he killed it. But he found that it was just like any other goose. So, trying to become rich all at once, he lost his small steady supply of gold.

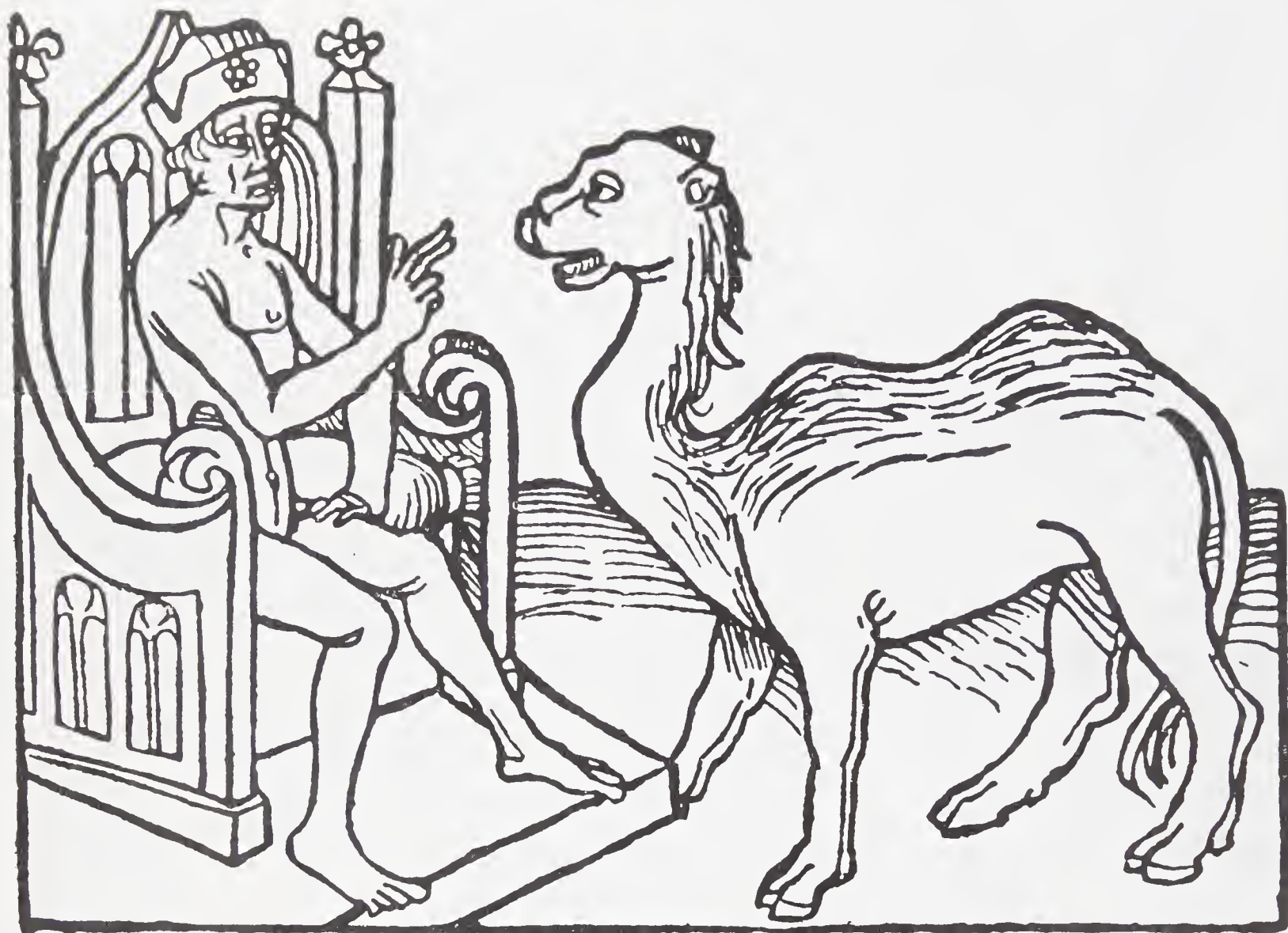
Moral: Don't be greedy or you may end up with nothing.



A very thirsty crow found a well with a bucket beside it. But there was only a little water at the bottom of the bucket, and the crow wasn't able to reach it. Finally she got an idea. She dropped pebbles into the bucket, more and more pebbles, until the water got high enough for her to reach it and quench her thirst.

Moral: If you are clever you can sometimes achieve what appears to be impossible.

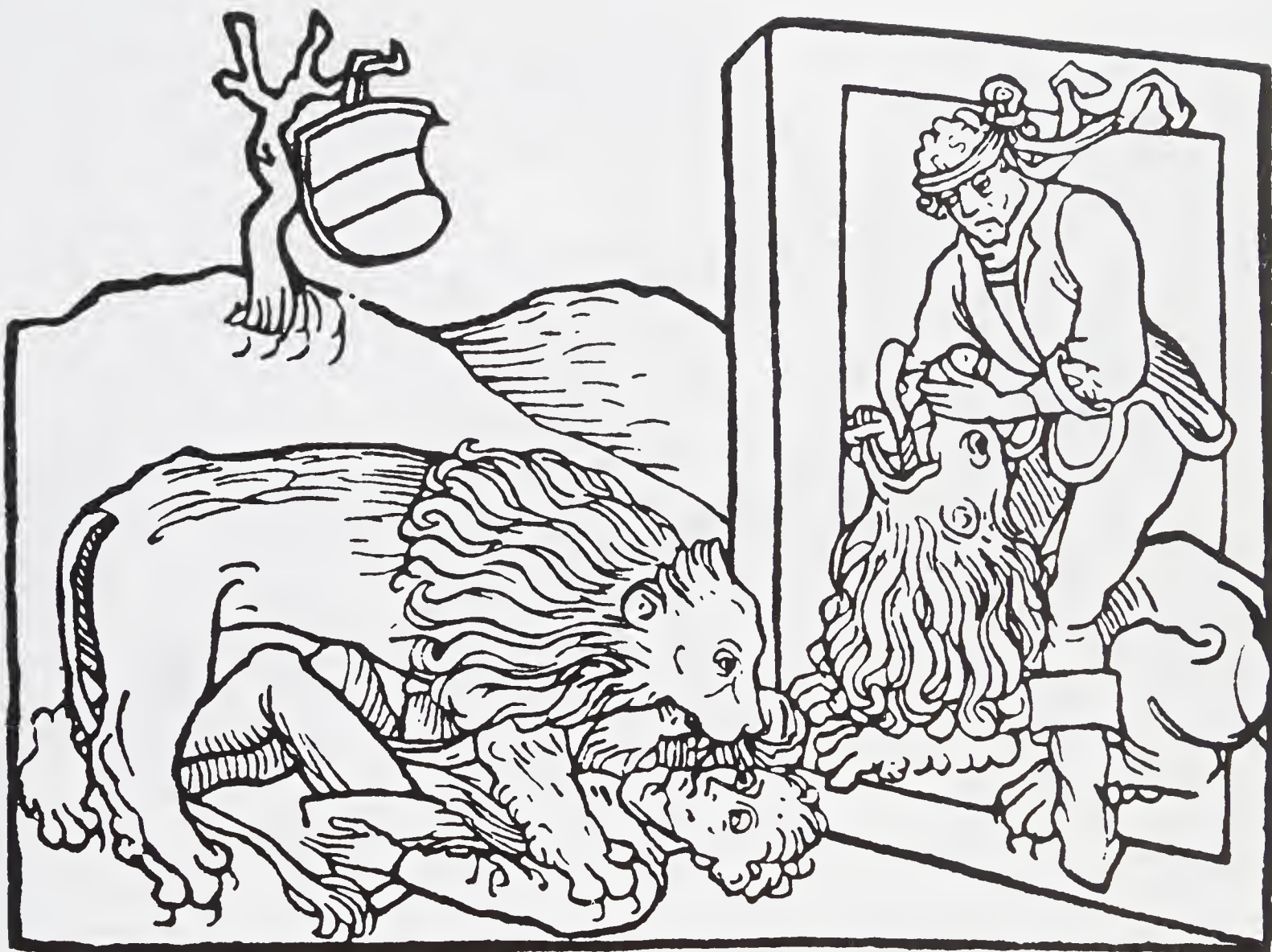
The Crow at the Well



The Camel & Jupiter

A camel became jealous when he saw what splendid horns the bull had. So he went to Jupiter, the king of the gods, and asked for horns. Jupiter grew angry and said, "Since you're not satisfied with the big strong body I gave you, and you want more than you're supposed to have—not only do I refuse to give you horns, but I'm going to take away a part of your ears." And that is why the camel has such small ears for such a large animal.

Moral: Don't ask for more; things may be better just as they are.



Once a lion was journeying with a man, and each of them was boasting about himself. Along the side of the road they found a stone carving that showed a man strangling a lion. "You see!" said the man. "That proves that we men are stronger than you lions, and more powerful than any animal." The lion replied, "Pictures like this are all made by you. If lions could carve stones, you would see all the lions winning."

Moral: Boastful people often support their claims with questionable evidence.

The Man Traveling with a Lion



The Donkey in the Lion's Skin

A donkey found a lion's skin that some hunter had lost, and put it on. Then he went around scaring all the small animals that he met. But his owner recognized him at once by his long ears, and pulled him home.

Moral: People who put on airs are sure to be found out.



A fox was running away from hunters when he met a man in the wilderness. The fox begged the man to hide him, and the man showed him a good hiding place. Soon the hunters arrived and asked the countryman whether he had seen the fox. The man said no, but he pointed to the fox's hiding place. The hunters paid no attention to this, and left. When the fox saw that they had gone, he started to run away in another direction. The man called after him, "I saved your life. Aren't you going to thank me?" The fox turned and said, "I *would* thank you, if your actions had been as friendly as your words."

Moral: Some people talk as if they were your friend, but don't act that way.

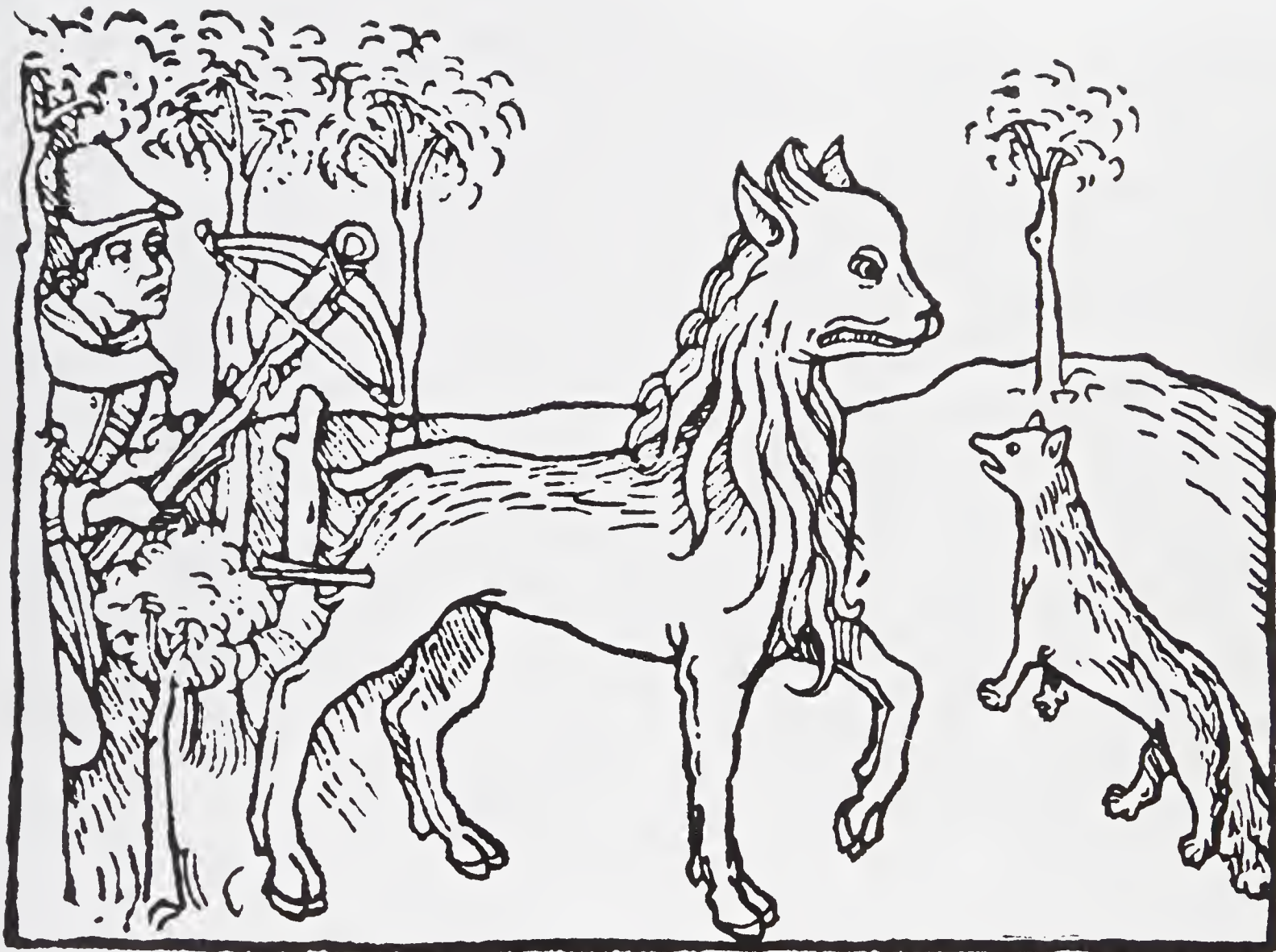
The Fox & the Countryman



The Farmer's Son & the Snake

A farmer's son was bitten by a snake and died. The farmer, who was very sad and angry, took his axe and went to the snake's lair. There he stood waiting for the snake to come out so he could kill it. The snake peeked out and the farmer swung the axe at it. He missed the snake but he chipped off a piece of the rock outside the lair. Later on the farmer wanted to be friends with the snake again, but the snake said, "I can never be your friend as long as I see the mark you made on the stone, and you can never be my friend as long as you see your son's grave."

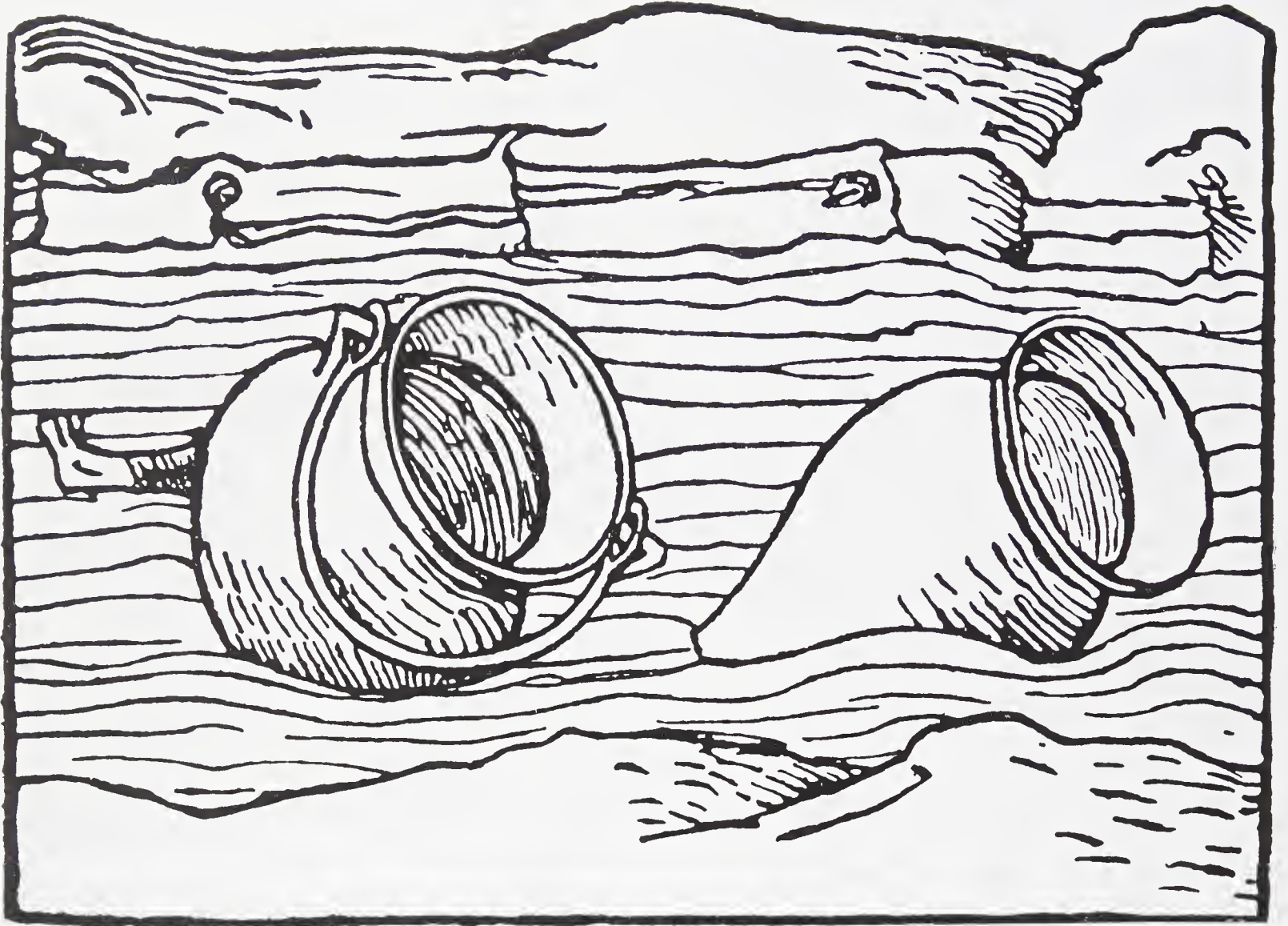
Moral: If you get too angry with someone, it may become too hard for you to make up again—so control your temper.



A hunter went out into the hills with his bow. All the animals ran away at the sight of him, except the lion, who stayed to fight. But the man shot the lion with an arrow, saying, "This is my messenger. Get acquainted with him, and then I will come after you myself." When the lion started to run, the fox urged him to be brave and stand his ground. But the lion said, "You'll never convince me. If the hunter's messenger is as terrible as this, I don't want to meet the hunter in person."

Moral: A word to the wise is sufficient.

The Archer & the Lion



The Two Pots

A clay pot and a metal pot were floating down a river. The clay pot said to the metal pot, "Please keep far, far away from me. If you bump into me, I will be smashed, even though I'm not the one doing the bumping."

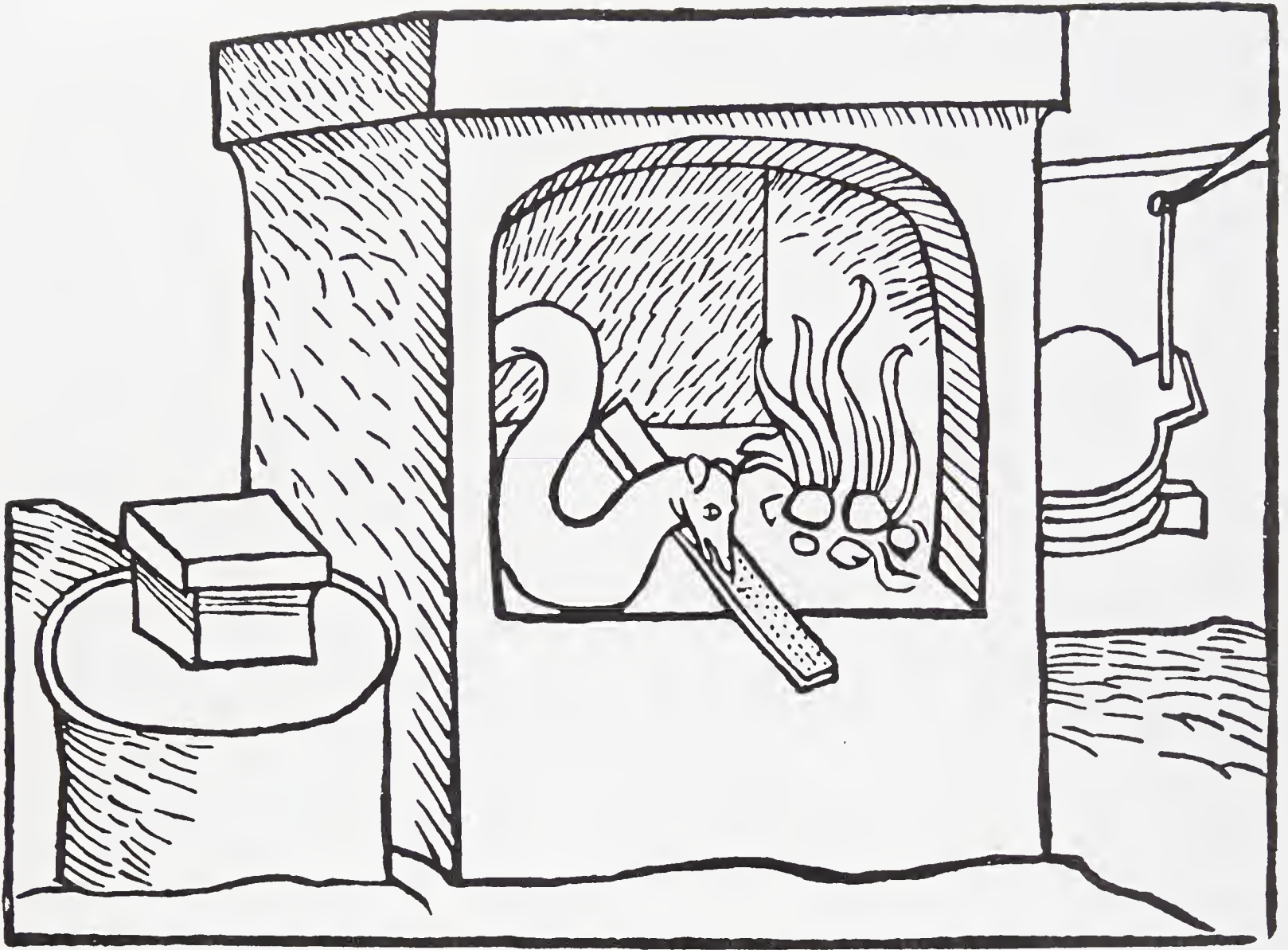
Moral: A humble man is in danger if he has a powerful man for a neighbor.



Long ago people told stories like this one about creatures called satyrs, who were part human and part goat, and lived in the forest. A man and a satyr became friends and were going to have a meal together. It was a cold winter day, and the man blew on his hands. "Why do you do that, my friend?" asked the satyr. "To warm them," answered the man. Then the food was ready. It was piping hot, and the man blew on it. "Why do you do that, friend?" the satyr asked. "To cool it," the man answered. When the satyr heard that, he said, "I'm sorry, but I don't want to be friends with you any more. With only one mouth, you blow both hot and cold."

Moral: Don't trust people who say one thing one time and another thing another time.

The Man & the Satyr



The Snake & the File

A snake came into a blacksmith's shop and tried to find something to eat among the tools. Going over to the file, the snake asked it if it could spare anything. The file replied, "You're a fool if you think you're going to get anything from me. I'm not used to giving, I'm used to taking things away."

Moral: It's no use trying to get help from selfish people.



A fir tree was boasting, and said to a bramble bush, "You are good for nothing, but I am needed for building houses." The bramble replied, "You poor fool, if you thought a minute about the axes and saws that the woodcutters use on you, you would wish you were a bramble instead of a fir."

Moral: Better to be poor and carefree than to be rich and worried.

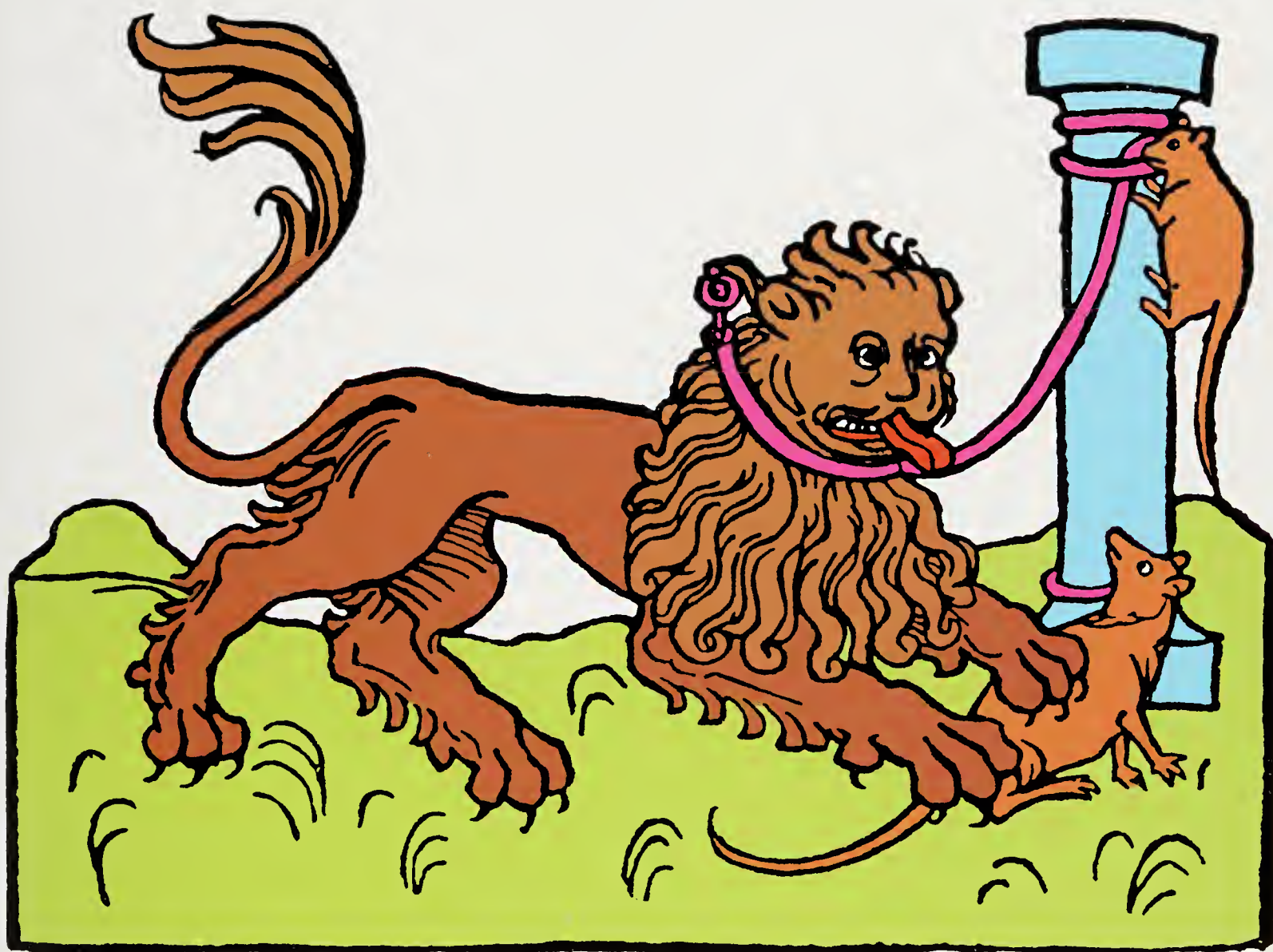
The Fir & the Bramble

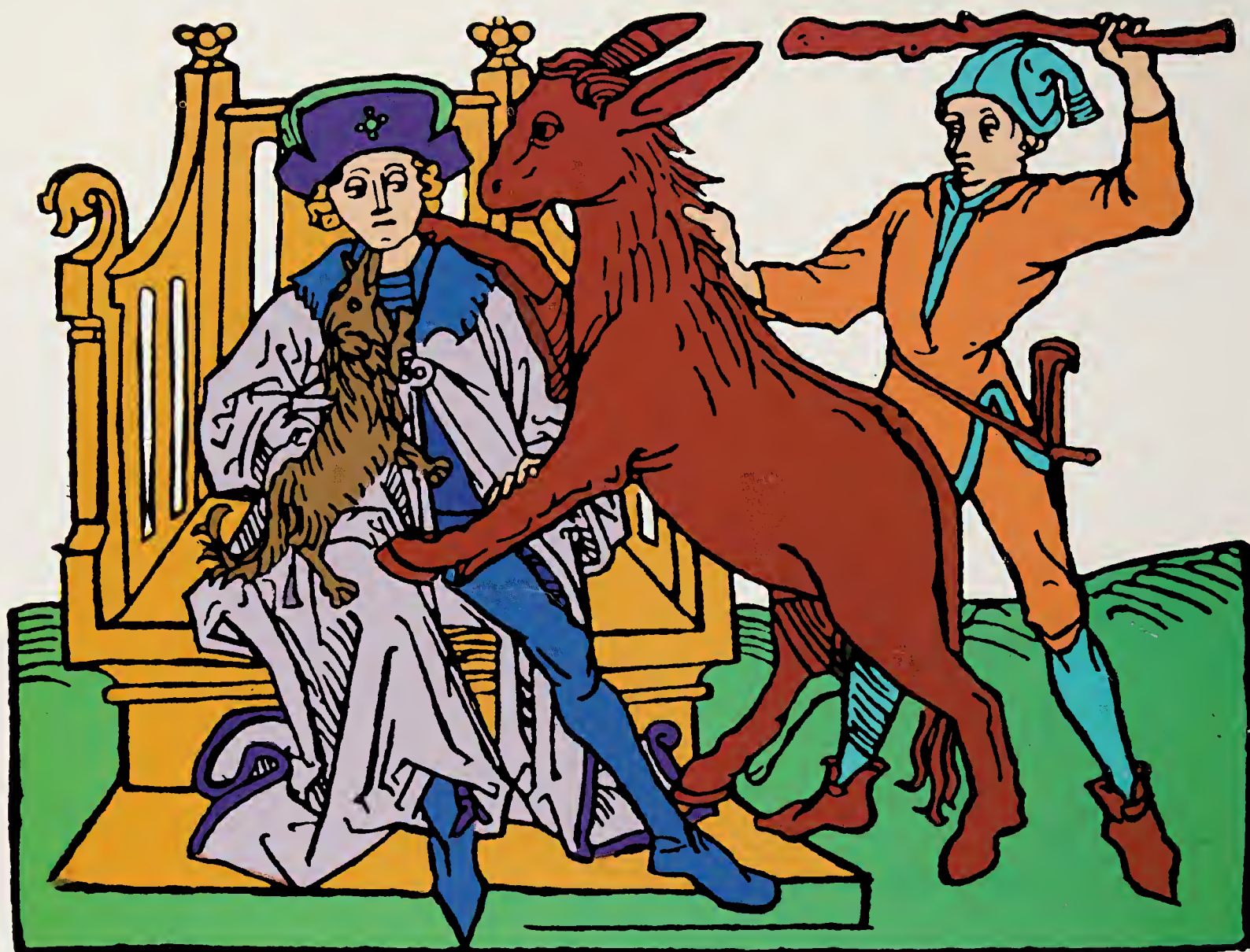


The Fisherman & the Little Fish

A fisherman once caught a tiny sprat. The fish begged, "Don't take me right now—I'm so small. Wait until I grow up and get big, then you can catch me. I'll be of more use to you then." But the fisherman answered, "I would be a fool to let you go now that I've got you, small as you are. How do I know I would ever find you again when you got big?"

Moral: Take a little bit now instead of just hoping you will get more later.





AESOP'S FABLES COLORING BOOK

It is not known whether Aesop himself drew pictures to accompany his fables, and then for relaxation, colored them in, but ever since, his little animal stories with their accompanying morals have been substance for artists and colorists alike. The illustrations to the 46 fables included in this new coloring book were done by an unknown woodcut artist in a German incunabular edition of Aesop dating from 1476. Their quality of both capturing the essence of the fable and inviting any coloring medium made them popular for coloring in the 15th century and still make them popular today. You will be familiar with many of these fables, but if there are some you cannot quite remember, new translations from the original surviving Greek texts have been made to give the right sense of these fables as they have been known since the time in 580 B.C. when Aesop made them up.

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